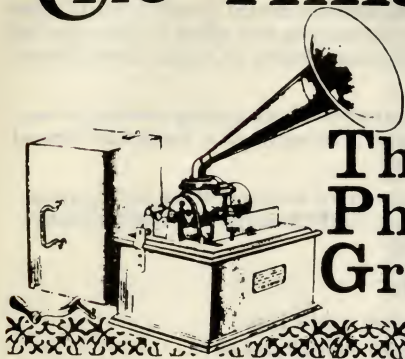


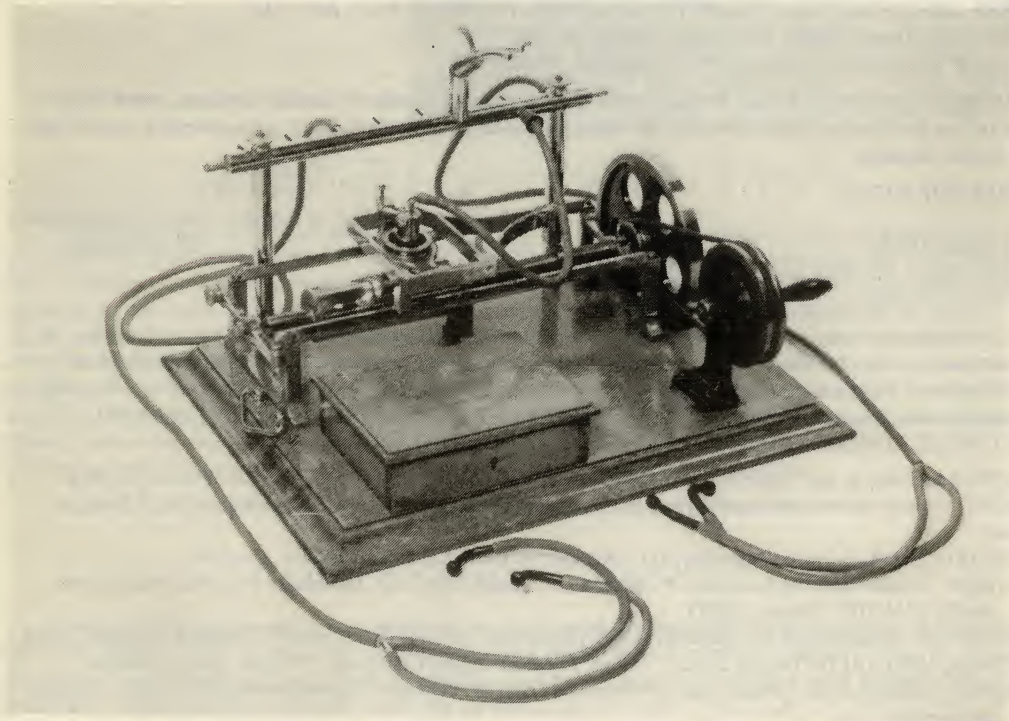
# *The Hillandale News*



The official journal of the  
**The City of London  
Phonograph and  
Gramophone Society**  
inaugurated 1919

NO. 89

APRIL, 1976



# SOCIETY RULES

1. That the Society shall be called THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY and that its objects shall be the social intercourse of its member study of sound reproducing apparatus, as well as its application
2. That the Officers of the Society shall consist of a President, Vice Secretary, Financial treasurer and Meetings Secretary, who shall in October, and who shall be ex-officio members of the Committee
3. That the management of the Society be vested in a Committee Meeting, and with power to co-opt, and that its duties shall be to objects. Written notice must be given to the Secretary one clear ing of any resolution proposing to amend these rules.
4. New members (ladies or gentlemen) may be elected on the nom meeting of the Society on the payment of an annual subscription Meeting, which is renewable twelve calendar months thereafter.
5. The financial Treasurer shall, once in every year, submit a state Auditor elected by the Society and shall furnish a Balance Shee for the inspection of members at each Annual General Meeting.

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## MEMBERSHIP RATES:

U.K.	£2.25 per year	U.S.A. & Canada	\$6.00 Surface Mail
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MEETINGS are held at the "John Snow" Public House, Broadwick Street, Soho, London, W.1, on the first MONDAY of every month commencing at 7.00 p.m. In addition, regular meetings are held at the following centres:

HEREFORD Details from the Secretary, D.G. Watson, [REDACTED] Tupsley, Hereford.

MIDLANDS Details from the Secretary, P. Bennett, [REDACTED] Wolverhampton, Staffs, WV4 5DE. Phone: [REDACTED]

MANCHESTER Details from the Secretary, Clive Thompson, [REDACTED] Mosley Common, Worsley, Lancs.

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MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE that all money should now be sent to our Treasurer, B.A. Williamson, [REDACTED] Liverpool, L15 1LA.



## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

I met the Editor this morning at some auction place in South Kensington, and was told that he was holding up this issue until I deigned to produce my Chairman's Chat. I have never envied journalists their need to produce scripts to order, and there are times when I regret my decision to make this column a regular feature of the **Hillandale News**. I can only hope that inspiration will come as I type — on a pre-war typewriter, of course; a Remington portable, in fact, one of the few Remington models that just scrapes into Michael Adler's work on typewriters, on account of its folding typebars, which mean that it is not quite in the 'conventional' category. This book, incidentally, ('The Writing Machine', published by Allen and Unwin) is well worth reading; apart from being a most scholarly work, it is highly amusing. In order to keep it to reasonable proportions, the author has excluded all 'conventional' typewriters, that is, all those with a four-row keyboard and front-strike typebars. The variety of alternative designs is quite astonishing.

I had an unexpectedly good response to my request for suggestions on the Society's name in the last issue. That is to say, two members have actually bothered to voice their opinion — and both favoured 'The City of London Talking Machine Society'. Fifteen all, I suppose; I still think the 'City of' bit is irrelevant, and the historic factor is a pretty minor one, we are a society for preserving gramophones, not for preserving societies. I suppose one could collect societies, it would be a lot cheaper than collecting talking machines, but thinking about this I concluded that the trouble with the name as it exists is that you have to get through quite a mouthful before you get to the operative words 'phonograph and gramophone' or 'talking machine' as the case may be. Perhaps we should take a leaf out of the Musical Box Society's book and turn it all round; 'The Talking Machine Society of Great Britain' or just 'of London'. Now a further complication has presented itself; a member suggested to me recently that we should take vintage radio under our wing, since there are now many collectors in this field and no society for them in this country. I think this an excellent idea; the single word 'Wireless' is sufficiently antique in flavour to imply the 'vintage' bit, but we are still getting yet another word in the title with this, and this makes it all the more important to put the operative words at the beginning of the name. Further opinions on this, please.

## FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION

Following the tin-foil shown last month, here is another beautifully engineered rarity of a decade or so later. I can't tell you who made it, and I daresay no one else will be able to either. It incorporates what appears to be an Edison reproducer and mandrell, but the rest of it was clearly made by an engineer or instrument-maker with access to a foundry. The design of the hand-drive suggests that the machine was inspired by the early Graphophones as much as Edison's Phonograph, and because it is designed for a right-handed operator, the mandrel is reversed, so that the cylinder is placed on the mandrel from the left-hand end. The gallery and its 'spur' provide for eleven hearing tubes, and, apart from the possibility of its having been made for a cricket team, one feels the machine may have been used by a travelling showman, for whom the minor inconvenience of having to turn the thing by hand would have been more than compensated for by its complete reliability and independence of power sources. The probable date would be in the period 1890-94.

This machine is included in the sale at Christie's, South Kensington, on May 19th.

## IN LOVE OF A VOICE

It was lovely warm weather coming up to Whit-week in the year 1928 and my dear Dad was stretching himself with pleasure in anticipation of a first trip to London on which I was to accompany him. I can still recall the delight in preparation even today, as though it was a major trip abroad and which it felt as though it was to us then.

It was Whit Sunday and as we went for the night train from Manchester, we called at my Grandmother's spacious Victorian house. My Grandmother was an impressive sight in her Sunday best, being a costumier by trade, and welcomed us in with warm pleasure. As she opened the door my Grandfather, who was an organist, was playing records in the parlour on a Columbia Gramophone and from it was coming out the golden tones of Caruso and I fell in love with a voice. Of course, I didn't know who the singer was, and as refreshment was being enjoyed and "La Donna e' Mobile" was played again, they told me it was the voice of the great Caruso.

I couldn't get the splendid idea of the Gramophone out of my mind in London and yet I didn't know then, that it would be the voice to start me off as a record collector over the next 50 years, progressing from one great artiste to another, which today has become a way of life.

We had an Edison Phonograph when I was young and my Dad who was a keen hobbyist and photographer got the message yet again. While we were in London we bought enough parts to build a splendid Gramophone when we got back home. This brought us joy for a long time but I progressed with more up to date machines as the years went by, and have kept faith ever since with the latest comprehensive gear.

Apart from a large general collection of records I now possess every record Caruso ever made, either in L.P. transfer or 78 with some in duplicate. I have also interesting correspondence with Mr Francis Robinson, the American Caruso authority and assistant manager of the Metropolitan Opera Co., New York.

I am familiar with the Naples of Caruso's early days, and have paid a visit to his tomb in the cemetery near the airport. My wife and I went there in a taxi and were shown the spot by the driver. As we stood before the great bronze gates a calm came over us from the excitement we had, and for me all those great recordings slowly passed before my mind in a cavalcade.

This is a most beautiful tomb made in black granite and white marble. It is as big as a small detached house and the marble sarcophagus lies in the middle of a beautifully tiled floor in front of an impressive altar. The gold inscription on the side reads "Enrico Caruso 1873 - 1921". The white marble frontage to the tomb on either side of the bronze gates are covered with the autographs of fans from all over the world in different languages, some with snatches of musical scores added too. Flowers litter the steps to the place on festive days and a permanent spray of Hydrangea (Enrico's favorite flower) made in fine porcelain lay across the top of the sarcophagus.

In an even grander tomb next door to Caruso lies Ruggerio Leoncavallo. The aria "Vesti La Giubba" from his opera "Il Pagliacci" was recorded by Caruso and became the first golden disc of over 1,000,000 copies.

It is a great tribute to this grand singer that more than 50 years since his death, any L.P. transfer of his 78s that appear are snapped up like hot cakes the world over. Italy being the first country to put him on tape cassettes.

H. Moss, Manchester Branch.

### **BOOK REVIEW    The Price Guide to Antiques, by James Mackay (Chancery House Publishing, £6.95).**

This volume aims to provide brief introductions to over 100 collecting subjects, with indications of current market values. There are chapters on gramophones, musical boxes and typewriters, of which only the second can be recommended. That on gramophones starts off in good form by telling us that 'gramophone' and 'phonograph' are synonymous, and thereafter manages to present us with more unadulterated nonsense than I would have believed possible for four



small pages to contain. I will not endeavour to criticise individual points, for the whole account is more or less fictitious. So as many of the prices quoted, and one wonders how when the promised price revision is published in December, the perpetrators of this book will revise prices that refer to non-existent objects. The give-away comes at the end of the chapter, 'Reading List: No books aimed at the collector have yet been produced'. Clearly, none of those that have been published reached the notice of the author of this flight of fancy, and one wonders how he got hold of the few accurate facts that do peep out from the jungle. If you have £6.95 to spend, I suggest you go down to your local junk-shop and buy some records, or a portable gramophone, or something - anything but this book.

C.P.



Another Pair of Portables: that on the left is one of the early HMV 101 models, dating from 1925-6. This model is as important in the history of portables as the Decca, for it was the first one to reflect the new, mathematical theories of horn design which appeared at the time when electrical recording was being introduced. Compton Mackenzie saw the new models during a visit to Hayes and wrote in "The Gramophone" of November, 1925, "It is not quite the thing for the editor of 'The Gramophone' to say, but I really do feel rather sorry for other portables". The magazine's Expert Committee, reporting in the January 1926 issue, were equally complimentary, although they found an irritating buzz which was traced to the needle-containers in the lid, removal of these cured the defect, and it was presumably for this reason that the later versions have the familiar pivoted needle-drawer in the front right-hand corner of the case.

The model on the right is a Columbia 110, the 1927 version of the 10a, introduced in the summer of 1925 with a fatter tone-arm and the No. 7 soundbox. As far as I know, this was the first real portable to come from Columbia, unless one counts the Regal Compactophone of the Great War era, it is an ingenious design in which the tone-arm rises into place and the louvres open automatically as the lid is opened.

From "The Gramophone", September 1925: The ungramophonic friend who sauntered into the office on the morning after and mistook a bottle of Britton's Famous Rapid Record Reviver, which was on the mantelpiece, for a new kind of pick-me-up, is still on the sick list.

\* \* \* \* \*

## OUR LATE HON. MEMBER GEORGE BAKER – BARITONE

By Frank Andrews

Members will recall that I recently carried out a survey into what may or may have not been recordings of George Baker's voice issued on the Fonotipia Limited/Carl Lindström (London) Ltd. labels during World War One, in which I addressed myself to Mr. George Baker, in the form of an open letter, asking if he could recall events of those bygone days. Sad to say, Mr. Baker never replied, and now he is gone! A little information did come to me from members in response to my article, but not enough for me to draw any conclusions as to which of the recordings I listed were by George, and which were not. One Beka Grand Record, of my own, indicates that the artiste covered by the names of Robert English and Victor Conway, each to a side, are more likely to be of Robert Howe than of George. I did meet one member who had a "Robert English" on the later Parlophones, and he had the impression that Robert English was not a pseudonym! Has anyone any knowledge of a "live" singer of that name of that period?

In the series run by the "Talking Machine News" many years ago, called 'Stars of the Record World', Mr. George Baker was featured in April, 1915. Herewith is what was written about him at that time.

"Mr. George Baker is by way of being a prodigy. At the early age of sixteen he was officially appointed as organist and choirmaster at Woodchurch Parish Church, and was compelled to wear a bowler hat on all outdoor occasions in order to give full 'empressement' to the dignity of his position.

"Everyone knows that the gentleman filling that dignified twain of offices is an important person; in fact, in the minds of many of the cult, they rank above the poor rector or vicar, who has merely to conduct the service and preach a sermon or two, so that when one hears of such a position being filled by a lad in his early teens it is quite safe to call it something in the way of a phenomena.

"My subject was born in the year 1885, in the maritime town of Birkenhead. After the usual childhood's period he was sent to Birkenhead School to go through the usual educational course to fit him for the battle of life. Birkenhead School has turned out more than one distinguished scholar, but none so famous as the Right Hon. F.E. Smith, of Cabinet Minister fame. There he (George) went through the usual curriculum with the average amount of success of a clever youth, but even at that early age his heart and soul was in music.

"Fancy, he began to learn the piano at the age of eight, at a time when the infantile digits would find it hard to stretch anything like a chord, and all the while he was at school wrestling with Euclid, Greek roots, algebra and other pleasing subjects, he was taking music lessons privately.

"In another branch of music, too, he early developed that talent that he now possesses as a vocalist, for he was a chorister in Liverpool Parish Church for some years. It is a somewhat remarkable fact the number of our leading male concert artists who have had their earliest training in singing in the chancel of a church, but it is a strong proof that the early lessons received in this manner tend to the development of the voice, and they are of excellent service to the coming artiste.



"As would seem very consistent, Mr. Baker took up the organ after his voice broke. The King of Instruments (in my opinion) requires a great deal of devotion from those who would master its wonderful powers, but it was no weary task for him. He possesses the soul of music to a marked degree, and the weary grind of lessons had no terrors for him. Inasmuch, that we find, he gets an organist's appointment at the age of sixteen. This was followed by a similar position at St. Matthew's Church, Birkenhead, and later at St. Michael's in the same town. All this before he was twenty-three years of age!

"At that time came the turning point in his career. Up to this period he had been engaged in commercial life, but the winning of a scholarship at the Royal College of Music made him decide to take up music as a profession.

"Previously, I may say, he had been under the well-known master, John Acton of Manchester, for singing. This master has turned out some vocalists whose names are familiar to concert frequenters. Miss Agnes Nichols, Mr. Webster Millar, Mr. Joseph Cheetham, are examples of his finished article, and there are many others, so that it was a more or less advanced pupil that came to that shrine of musical learning, the Royal College of Music, as a student.

"There he studied under the professional guidance of those two famous teachers, Professors Garcia and Visetti.

"During his studentship, Mr. Baker was appointed solo bass in the choir of St. Peter's, Cranley Gardens, an appointment that gave him ample opportunity for the practical exercise of the valuable lessons he was receiving from his famous teachers.

"Another valuable opportunity for showing the effect of these occurred in the annual operatic performance by the students of the College. Mr. Baker took part in four of these, which are generally held at His Majesty's Theatre. In one of them particularly he scored a big success, and that was in the title part of Cherubini's charming opera, "The Water Carrier". It says a great deal for the all round abilities of my subject to be able to make such a statement, for all the world knows that these annual functions of the Royal College of Music are very serious affairs, that is in the sense that they are given with every attention to detail and real thought, and for the artiste to win his spurs thereat proves that he or she must possess abilities above the common.

"The concert-going public are familiar with Mr. Baker's name and abilities, for his fine voice has been heard at most of the recognised concerts in both London and the provinces. Such musical functions as the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts, or the Chappell Ballad Series, have been accustomed to include my subject's name on their programmes, and he is a great favourite with the patrons of these classical musical events.

"He has sung on two occasions at the Brighton Festival, viz., in 1910 and 1912, and that is another proof of his high standing in the profession, for the musical festival at the Queen of Watering places ranks high in the domain of musical gatherings.

"In most of the big provincial centres of industry — Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham — and most critical of all, perhaps, Huddersfield — he is well known. In the latter place, as in Wales, singing forms a very large part of the recreation of the people, and the artiste who can please a Huddersfield, or, for the matter of that, any South Yorkshire audience, has to be a bit above the common groove, so that when I say that he is a great favourite there it is a really valuable testimonial to his talents.

"Further proof of his ability is forthcoming in the fact that he has taken the coveted diploma of A.R.C.M. Then there is the fact also that he has won the London Musical Society's prize for singing, an honour that counts for much in professional vocal circles, and which goes further to prove my subject's right to the position of a 'star' in our industry.

"After that came a course of study in Milan to master the Italian style of vocalism under the

celebrated Thomas Blackburn, who has turned out a great number of English artistes of the highest tank, and we have the finished and clever vocalist, a description that everyone who has had the pleasure of hearing him will readily subscribe to.

"Mr. Baker has another and intimate association with the talking machine trade, in that he married Miss Lilian Bryant, the well-known lady conductor of the Pathe Orchestra. Mrs. Baker, by her maiden name, is a household word in talking machine circles, and in the matter of art the marriage is of the happiest description.

"In matters gramophonic, he has made several splendid titles for the Zonophone, Columbia, and Pathé Freres companies. At present he is confining himself to the Beka Company, and they have made a goodly list of capital titles by him.

"He is the happy possessor, not only of a rich baritone voice for platform work, but also one that is eminently suitable for recording purposes. It is a well known fact, and one to the despair of the recording experts, that there are many artistes whose platform delivery is excellent, but when it comes to taking a record of the same there is some little quality that is deficient, and the voice will not 'impinge' on the diaphragm, so to speak. With Mr. Baker this is all right, and hence we have the capital examples in the catalogues by him.

"In private life he is a member of the famous Savage Club, where all who are foremost in the various arts meet in fellowship, and where men whose names are household words are to be seen gathered in the 'camaraderie' of club life. His principal recreation is golf, and he is a member of the well-known Hanger Hill Golf Club . . . . .

"So it can be seen by this short notice of his career that Mr. George Baker fully deserves his inclusion among the 'Stars of the Record World', and that he may long maintain it will be the wish of all 'phonoists who care for what is best in vocal art.'" E.S. Stansfield.

Here are two reviews of George's recordings made at the Beka Record Company's studios in City Road, London, during the war 1914-18.

12" Scala de Luxe Record, No. 1664. "I have for some time considered George Baker to be one of the finest baritones we have, for not only is he a fine singer with a fine voice, but he also possesses a temperament and uses it. Though he has now attained to the well deserved dignity of the 5/6d. single-sided (A reference to "H.M.V." — F.A.), he has left behind him on his way up, as it were, several records at quite reasonable or cheap prices, that are just as finely sung as is his latest work.

"One of these is 'When the King Went Forth to War' on 12" Scala de Luxe Record 1664. It is a fine song and has been essayed by many of the great basses and baritones, from Chaliapine downwards, but one could hardly wish for a better interpretation than George Baker gives us. It affords, in the contrast of the lots of the King and common soldier, plenty of scope for variety of expression, of which composer and singer have made the most. In construction it belongs to the so-called 'art song' type as seen, for example, in Schubert's 'Erl King', that is to say the musical setting aims at enhancing the feeling of the words, without much regard to the musical form. In this case the effect relies largely on rhythm, — compare the martial swing of the first stanza with the more legato treatment, and the middle agitato section, with its 'choppy' time. The melody, especially in its latter half, is very similar, it is the accompaniment that makes most of the difference, though here it is greatly helped by the art of the singer, who quite alters the tone quality of his voice in these contrasting passages. In fact, one of the most telling features of Baker's singing is the way he seems able to make the quality of his voice suit the sentiment he wishes to convey. Notice in the last two stanzas the velvety softness that adds to the tragedy of the quiet ending."

*(The reverse carried "The Two Grenadiers" of Schumann, also sung by George Baker. — F.A.)*



George Baker as George Barnes on Beka Meister M.179. Note that the reviewer seems to know that he is dealing with a well-known singer.

"Mr. Barnes is a singer with a highly cultivated baritone voice who renders two of the least known numbers from 'Faust' in the most irreproachable manner. These are the famous Serenade and the Death of Valentin. In his vocalisation he proves himself to be a welcome addition to our all too few operatic artistes of Home Growth. He sings with a distinction which is quite remarkable, exhibiting the most careful training. As a maker of records he is perfectly au fait of all the necessary requirements, and will doubtless be received with unbounded applause by all truly musical gramophonists."

It was the usual practice in those days for record companies to introduce their new artistes to the dealers and public, by enclosing a photograph with their first announcements of their new captures. This was not done in the case of George Barnes, for obvious reasons!!

## SOME FACTS ON BEKA

by W. Keessen

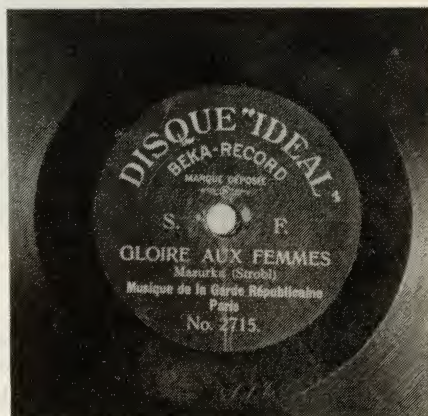


In 1904 the Beka Record G.m.b.H. (a company with restricted responsibility) at 105-106 Alexandrinen Strasse in Berlin was formed by two Germans, named Bumb and König.

The name Beka was chosen from their initials, whilst the trademark of the company became the well-known flamingo, listening at a horn of a gramophone.

(Continued on page 472)







## SOME FACTS ON BEKA (from page 470)

The young company was very active in the recording field and did not restrict herself to Germany or even to Europe, recording teams were also sent out to the Middle East and Asia.

One recording team, operating in Yugoslavia, was involved in a railway accident in the surroundings of Belgrade.

Proudly two members of the expedition, Bumb (one of the directors of the company?) and Bielefeld telegraphed their headquarters at Berlin that none of the Beka records they had taken with them were broken.

For your information: 'Beste Schallplatte der Welt' means "Best Record of the World".

The records appeared under the names Beka, Beka Grand Record, Beka Ideal, Beka Meister Record and Beka Sinfonie Record; their sizes were 8", 10", 11" and 12".

For some time as an effort to compete with the firm of Pathé vertically cut records, named Beka-Saphir-Record, were brought out.

Some famous singers, now much sought after, were recorded – Marie Goetz, Hubert Paty, Zélie de Lussan, Mary Boyer, Emilie Herzog, Walter Kirchoff, Charles Rousselière, and Friedrich Broderson.

The Beka Meister Records, launched in 1911, had artists like Jamieson Dodds, Lenghi Cellini, Fritz Vogelstrom, Blanche Tomlin, Hedwig Francillo Kaufmann and George Baker.

In the same year an orchestra was formed for the purpose of recording, the so-called Meister Orchestra.

Although the original intention must have been to use this orchestra for the recording of classical works only, mainly opera overtures were recorded.

The Beka Record Company finally was bought up by Carl Lindström.

## SOUND REFLECTIONS & ECHOES

### III "The Dominions"

This month I am going to look over my shoulder, back to the Dominions. No, not the mighty British Empire; although I am referring to the days when we really had one. The Dominions I refer to – some of you may have guessed – are the Dominion Records of the 78 r.p.m. gramophone days.

Why have I chosen this particular one when there are so many to choose from? Well, when I started collecting records, as a school-boy in the late 40's, I had just one "lesser-known" label among the usual HMV's, Decca's, Columbia's and Parlophone's etc. It was Elsie Carlisle singing two popular Ballads of the time when the record was pressed in 1928/29. "What is this thing called love" / "Let's do it, let's fall in love". Alas, I have it no more.

But my memory of the *label* goes back even further – to pre-war days in fact. The label design was certainly pictorial, and never changed from first to last in the series. Most were the popular Cream A - series, but there are to be found very rare examples of light classical/operatic/drama on the blue B-series and red C-series. All consisted of the Globe concentric with the centre hole (with the map clear and accurate enough to pick out the British Empire in red), and the record around it bearing the legend "Dominion Records Encircle the World", and the second O of Dominion being in the form of a gramophone sound-box actually playing the record. An original and ambitious design if ever.

The quality of the record and its musical content rarely lived up to it, however. They were made from a soft, gritty shellac cut too deep or too shallow, and hopelessly under-modulated. Although cheap at 1s.3d. they compared badly with the contemporary Broadcasts, Unisons, Eclipses and other cheap discs. They were pressed in Luton and had distribution depots all over the country. Jay Wilbur was the musical director – but it is hard to say who played on many of the records, as various "known" musicians played under assumed names.

Maybe they were over-ambitious with an attempt to cover such a wide field with three series (history was to repeat itself thirty years later with Rank Records). What finally broke the company was a pornographic record by Elsie Carlisle singing "My man of war" and (a version of) "Body and Soul". Although tame to modern standards this led to litigation that finally bankrupted the company. Their stock and a few remaining master-matrices were sold to Crystalate (to be re-issued on Imperial labels mid-30s, and itself destined eventually to become part of the Decca outfit), and on November 7th 1934 the company ceased to exist. Barry Raynaud.

I recall that in olden days, when I wished to listen once again to those fine old ballads like "Excelsior" or "The Lute Player" I had only to go along to my favorite record shop and buy a copy for a shilling or eighteenpence.

Now I must buy a L.P. at a pound or even two pounds, only to find that it has probably been "hotted-up" in the modern idiom.

So give me those fine old 78's and cylinders of the past, even if they are not quite Hi-Fi!

Other members - Your opinion, please.

## LONDON MEETING OF THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

at the "John Snow", Berwick Street, W.1, on February, 2nd, 1976

The member who should have given us a record recital was unable to attend, so in his stead, at the last moment, Mr. Bill Brott, the Society's Hon. Secretary, gallantly stepped in to fill the breach and brought along part of his collection of recordings made by celebrated Music Hall artistes.

This was something of a surprise, for Bill is well known to have a deep interest in operatic artiste's recordings.

The Society has recently brought into action its "wind-up" E.M. Ginn acoustic gramophone and the first few items were attempted on this machine, but I am afraid it proved unsuitable as we had the old difficulty of the fibre needles not "staying the course", to the end of the records, in spite of member Tim Massey's attempts at providing as good a point as possible. We then brought out the Society's amplifier and turntables and continued with electrical reproduction with member Barry Raynaud at the controls.

The programme was selected by Bill Brott and member Frank Andrews from the collection, the decision of "what to play next" being taken whilst a disc was revolving on the turntable. The choice was difficult because of the plethora of material, but between the two of them, a Top All-Star bill was presented — both members having something to say about the artistes, or the labels, or their own reminiscences. Some of those present also "chipped in" with their own observations.

The programme comprised Harry Champion, "Henery VIII"; Florrie Forde, "Down at the Old Bull and Bush" on a G & T Concert; Gus Elen, "It's a Great Big Shame"; Ella Shields, "Burlington Berite"; Wilkie Bard, "Sea Shells"; Lily Morris, "Don't have any more, Mrs. Moore"; Billy Bennett, "Don't send my Boy to Prison!"; Marie Lloyd, "A Little of what you fancy does you good"; Harry Champion, "Work, Boys, Work"; Gertie Gitana, "Nelly Dean"; Charles Coborn, "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo"; Billy Williams, "Since Father joined the Territorials" and Vesta Victoria singing a medley of songs for which she was famed.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman being absent, the vote of thanks to Bill was proposed by Frank Andrews, which was responded to in the usual manner, after which some dealing in discs and informal discussions between members ensued, before we left for our homes. An enjoyable evening.  
"London Reporter".

**WARNING** — I have just seen a Japanese replica of the early "Dog Model" Gramophone. It is near perfect, apart from the label and leather elbow which looks rather peculiar. I do not know how much they cost in Japan or whether they will be exported to this country. So if you are offered a new looking model, examine it in detail before you part with the small fortune they usually bring.

*Editor.*





# Christie's

## South Kensington

85 Old Brompton Road  
London SW7 3JS  
Tel: 01-589 2422

### MAY is LIORET Month at CSK

The Jumeau/Lioret phonograph doll above will be included in a sale of *Dolls, Toys and Automata* on May 6th; the *LIORET PHONOGRAPH Model A* below will be among the many talking machines in the *MECHANICAL MUSIC SALE* on May 19th.

Both sales start at 2 p.m. to allow viewing up to 12 noon on the day of sale. Illustrated catalogues of both sales will be available approximately three weeks beforehand.

For further details, contact  
Christopher Proudfoot  
(Mechanical Music) or Susan  
Mayor (Dolls, etc.).  
Please note our new telephone  
number: 01 581 2231.



Of late, the Hillandale News has made mention, in various articles, of Henry Seymour — inventor, manufacturer, author and, for many years, President of the North London Gramophone & Phonograph Society. I myself have recently had published in fellow Honorary Member Ernie Bayly's magazine "The Talking Machine Review", a history of Henry Seymour's commercially issued indestructible cylinder records which, when they did reach the market, were sold as Russell Indestructible Records.

The following article, taken from the "Talking Machine News", gives us a little more insight into the "man and his methods" and his views on the expected developments of the Talking Machine trade, — this long before he became a North London Society member, and long before he became associated with E.M. Ginn with the first of the latter's hand-made gramophones.

*From the "Talking Machine News" of 1st May, 1906.*

"WITH TRUMPETS ALSO AND SHAWMS". New Series — No. 2. By "The Recorder".

It is a refreshing experience to come into contact occasionally with an enthusiast, no matter in what. Call him a faddist if you will, it is to such people as these that the world owes what it has got of the best in every branch. In the talking machine world, such men as Mr. Henry Seymour, the moving spirit of the Microphonograph Company, of Liverpool Road, Islington, are the people who have raised the artistic element to the high position it has now attained. These are the men who, thinking in a very secondary way of the commercial side of the business, cannot rest until they have attained what they themselves admit they can never attain — perfection. They are the means by which each little but important improvement in the mechanism brings more closely into touch with the great world the reproductions of the great artistes that a world-wide industry can now enlist under its banner. He has told me the secret of his success. Told me in not so many words, but the rather in impression gained by the personality of the man whose whole heart and enthusiasm is in his work, And as a result the work and the products of the Microphonograph Company have been recognised by all who take a rightful interest in matters pertaining to talking machines. There is an air, let me say, of "boiling wax" about Mr. Seymour, by which I mean that one realises when talking with him that the scientific elements of the trade receive paramount attention in his mind, and that the pounds, shillings, and pence are secondary matters. In this way, however, true success lies.

I tackled him late one night, and, incidentally, if you want to have a chat with Mr. Seymour look for him at a late evening hour. He spends his time watching the success of his experiments in the perfecting of his work, and that is about the best time to catch him. Just try to arrange when a boiling of wax is at its best, say, or when he has succeeded in making a trifling improvement in some mechanism, trifling to your mind, perhaps, but important enough to make a great difference in the reproduction of sound or some kindred matter. He won't thank me for this tip, I believe, but here it is, anyway.

"How did you come to take up these matters?" I asked one night recently. "Well," said he, "I took them up as a novelty at first, and I must confess that I was disgusted with what I found on the market. The reproductions were so metallic, nasal, and thin that they sickened me." Then he went on to describe his first experiments. He had a Columbia machine and then a Pathé duplex machine. On the latter, by the way, he made all his experiments, with the result that the Seymour Reproducer is now acknowledged one of the best in the trade. The reason of this choice was, primarily, that the Pathé is capable of nearly every adjustment.

In a chatty conversational way he told me how he had his reproducer in use for a year before the pressure of friends induced him to put it on the market. Finally he took out letters of patent, and since then that and his recorder attachment have gone ahead, until from a small way he has grown until orders pour in from all parts of the world. From the Antipodes, India, Borneo, Switzerland, Russia even, came repeat orders for his goods. A tribute to their excellence and a proof that in this as in other directions good work pays.

Going on, Mr. Seymour told me how he first started by altering Edison machines by the manufacture of of carrier arms, and in this he still does a large trade. He claims to be the first to revolutionise the tone of the cylinder machine, and to give it the fuller deeper tone of the disc machine. The secret of his success, he told me in reply to my question, was that the Company regarded no result in the light of finality. Although the reproduction of a first-class record was not far from perfection, they still regarded it as part of their regular work every week to devote several hours to further experiment with a view to further improvement. "There is not much room for further improvement in the matter of the reproducer," said Mr. Seymour, "the improvement must come from



improvements in the making of the record."

"I notice you have recently altered the model of your reproducer," I mentioned to my subject. He agreed, saying that the slight improvement in the manufacture of the records warranted the alterations. "As a fact," he continued, "our first reproducer was the most scientifically constructed, and was by far the best from an ideal point of view. But the crudity of even the best records was revealed too much by its use, and the public would have none of it. So we had to take away some of its power, and by the change we made a reproducer considerably inferior in intrinsic merit, but which stifled much of the harshness, and the result was a more pleasing effect, though a diminished volume was the result. Since then the Seymour Reproducer has become an established success," said Mr. Seymour, with pardonable pride.

On the question of the wearing of the records, a matter arising in the columns of the "T.M.N.", Mr. Seymour was vigorous in his language. "That's all fiddlesticks," said he. "Of course, we have known of many cases of records quickly going, but on inspection we have always found that a bad adjustment was the cause, and that the repro was merely the apparent cause. Still, the deep cutting of records, together with the greater velocity at which they are now revolved, necessitates more weight being added to all reproducers, to overcome the centrifugal force engendered and to keep them close down to their work; in other words, to maintain the necessary frictional contact, which is the source of the sound in reproduction. Any tyro in dynamics knows this and record manufacturers ought to know it. This deeper cutting and increased velocity in recording makes it imperative that a harder substance than the metallic soaps should in every case be used for the making of records, and hard enough to withstand the increased resistance. Therefore, all the blame accorded to heavy reproducers must be put upon the shoulders of the record manufacturers who continue to use "soft" soap in their products. The Seymour Repro is not the heaviest by any means, and not a fraction more weight is attached to it than is actually necessary to produce correct tone." Then naturally came the question of sound magnifying, and to this he told me something that one can easily recognise as a truth. "You can easily magnify noise," said he, "but not quality. That's the whole thing in a nutshell. Much more volume can be got in the record itself by more scientific cutting and the study of angles (shade of Euclid!) presented by the recording sapphire, as well as by higher qualities in the foundation of everything, viz., the blanks."

Here I knew I had got on to a favourite subject. By my own observation I had seen the gradual development by experiment of the new master blanks that Mr. Seymour is putting on the market, and I knew the consequence of the question I had invited. "We are making perfect blanks," said he, in a voice that suggested don't-you-forget-it, "as perfect as we can imagine it necessary for them to be for first-class work, and we shall use them ourselves when we place our own records on the market."

I gave him his head after a leading question as to the future, and this is what he told me. "We are bringing out two models for amplifying horns shortly which promise to be the best yet produced. They have been carefully thought out. The body will be steel and the flare brass. They will be handsome in appearance; but most of all will they be of the correct taper and size for efficient work, points generally overlooked by the makers. Their lengths will be 42in. and 56in.

"Then we are also bringing out two types of phonograph. We have had two cheap lines out some time back, but they didn't satisfy us, so we are determined to make a really first-class article at a reasonable price. The whole thing has been designed by me, and will be manufactured under my own supervision in our own workshops."

Mr. Seymour appears to be lucky in his assistants. Particularly did he praise the clever work of Mr. James Gray, his foreman in the mechanical department. Mr. Gray comes of a talented stock. His father was the absolute inventor of the ball bearings, an invention that revolutionised the ideas of mechanical friction. By the way, these were first confined to ships' logs, and only when the application to cycle hubs came did they become prominent. Continuing, my informant rattled along in optimistic style about his latest mechanical pets. "These Microphonographs," said he, "will be driven either by springs or electric motors at different prices, being noiseless in either case. The first will be the Universal, to take small, intermediate, and concert records, and the second will be the Duplex, for small and intermediate. I have no faith in an immediate future for the longer record, but it will come eventually."

"Yes, we are being compelled to look for more extensive premises," was the reply to a question as to the truth of a rumour. "We have more than trebled our workshop capacity here by building during the last four years, and yet we are more choked up than ever. Our idea is to get more central for showroom and more suburban for workshop accommodation. You know yourself how we have to keep our noses to the grindstone," said he, and I did, and said so.

"What's your general opinion of the trade?" I ventured, whilst discussing a suggested long-promised moulded concert record. "Some people say the phonograph boom is over," was the reply. "Trash! The boom for rubbish is over. The real boom has yet to come, and it will be for high-class stuff. And the moulded concert record will lead the boom when it comes. We are not sorry to delay publishing these, for our recent dis-

coveries in matrix making will revolutionise the trade in record making. The vacuum process may now be regarded as out of date, if it was ever practised. We get equally fine surface at less cost with no risk, and can get several matrices from a single master. To give you an idea of the current tension employed, we can effect this result and produce a matrix sufficiently thick to cast a record in from 15 to 20 minutes — an almost phenomenal result."

"But my great belief in the future," went on Mr. Seymour, "is in the indestructible record, which we have brought to a fine pitch of perfection. Hitherto these records have been harsh and intolerable to the sensitive ear, notwithstanding their superior tone and wearing qualities." The public are getting sick of wax records, which are so quickly and easily destroyed. Ours will be equal to the best wax, and will be indestructible. To perfect these has cost us tremendous labour and money. It was so difficult to locate the faults. We had new materials made and applied, new methods of printing the films, and after all we found the chief causes to be something altogether apart. The matrix was an important element, but the blank was by far the most important. If we had started to look for the trouble at the beginning instead of the end we should have saved enormously in time and outlay."

In conclusion, just a few comments on the business of the Microphonograph Company. It is both extensive and peculiar. It is distinctly a house of origination, and many improvements in phono matters which do not bear their name have been worked out by them. They make disc recording machines and set up special recording appliances. They often receive commissions to make difficult master records, and an important branch is the making of masters for language study. They make private records for the leading artistes own use, and the latter are the sort of people for whom the company care to work. Their special requirement is for quality, regardless of commercial prices, and to all like them who would welcome excellent work I would recommend getting into touch with the Microphonograph Company. The results will certainly endorse my judgment, I am certain.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

I requested readers and members to let me know if they were interested in following up the controversy which ensued in the pages of the trade periodicals at the time when the "Damberol" records caused an argument at the North London Gramophone & Phonograph Society meeting, which I reported on in February 1976 issue of "Hillandale News". I said I was willing to research this matter provided at least 25 members showed enough interest in the affair to warrant me spending time over the subsequent debate, and I requested members to let me know if they were so interested. I have received only request to do so, and that was from Australia. My offer still stands, but it must be worth the effort in time and trouble to continue this subject.

Frank Andrews.

## HAVE YOU ANY CIGARETTE CARD RECORDS?

The following article appeared in "Cigarette Card and Trade Card Chronicle" on December, 1975, and is reproduced by kind permission of the editor. We hope that by circulating this among members they will look out any of these little record cards they may have, and let our Editor, Bill Brott, have any information not included in the article. Letters will be published in "Hillandale News" and results of your finds passed on to the above journal. Only last August Ernie Bayly played some of these cards at a London meeting, those of Dorothy Ward, Hermione Baddeley, Stanley Lupino, Anne Grey, George Allison and Herb Roberts, and it would be useful if the gaps in the listing could be filled. One odd thought is of the presence in the list of Ronald Frankau, who was surely tied to a Parlophone contract from 1930 right into Hitler's war, both for his solos and for the Murgatroyd and Winterbottom duologue with Tommy Handley.

George Frow.

"TALKIE" CIGARETTE CARDS

by E.C. WHARTON-TIGAR

*In the November 1974 issue (of THE CIGARETTE CARD AND TRADE CARD CHRONICLE) some*



notes were published about the various sub-series of the "Talkie" Cigarette Card, and it was forecast therefrom that the complete series must consist of at least thirty records.

Collectors sent in additional titles, and the situation has been summarised in the following very concise form, Nos. 31 and 34 have now been seen, and readers are asked if they can supply:-

- (a) The titles for Nos. 14, 16, 18, 19, 22, 23, 32, 33, and any numbers subsequent to No. 34 (using of course the number at the bottom right-hand corner at the back of the record).
- (b) Any titles at all bearing the name "The Record Tobacco Co."

The issuing Company was THE RECORD CIGARETTE CO. or THE RECORD TOBACCO CO'

The "Talkie" Cigarette Cards (miniature gramophone records) are numbered at base right-hand corner of the back, and also on top with one of the five sub-series, each of which is inscribed "Series of 25". The following are known:-

Number at R/Base	Inscription at top, all inscribed "Series of 25"	Subject
(1)	Variety - No. 4	Ronald Frankau
(2)	Variety - No. 6	Ronald Frankau
(3)	Variety - No. 1	The Houston Sisters
(4)	Film Stars - Intimate Interviews No. 1	Anne Grey
(5)	Sportsmen - No. 7	Hughie Gallacher
(6)	Sportsmen - No. 8	Tommy Law
(7)*	Sportsmen - No. 6	Leslie Knighton and Alan Craig*
(8)	The Stage - No. 1	Stanley Lupino
(9)	The Stage - No. 2	Hermione Baddeley
(10)	The Stage - No. 3	Bobbie Comber
(11)	The Stage - No. 4	Dorothy Dickson
(12)	The Stage - No. 5	Laddie Cliff
(13)	Film Stars - Intimate Interviews No. 2	Constance Cummings
(14)		
(15)	The Children's Hour - No. 5	Uncle Ajax
(16)		
(17)	The Children's Hour - No. 3	Uncle Ajax
(18)		
(19)		
(20)	Film Stars - Intimate Interviews No. 3	Laura La Plante
(21)	The Stage - No. 6	Dorothy Ward
(22)		
(23)		
(24)	Sportsmen - No. 2	Frank Moss
(25)	Sportsmen - No. 3	Herbert Roberts
(26)	Sportsmen - No. 4	Wilfred Copping
(27)	Sportsmen - No. 5	Eddie Hapgood
(28)	Sportsmen - No. 1	George F. Allison
(29)	Variety - No. 3	Douglas Byng
(30)	The Stage - No. 7	Nelson Keys
(31)	Variety - No. 6	(a) Ronald Frankau (b) Ronald Frankau *
(32)		
(33)		
(34)	Sportsmen - No. 9	Victor Woodley

\* - text indicates issue 1933-1934. Inscribed "The Record TOBACCO Co."

Taking the sub-series as listed above, the following are the subjects known:-

"The Stage" - Nos. 1/7

"The Children's Hour" - Nos. 3 and 5

"Variety" - Nos. 1, 3, 4, 6 (twice) \*

"Sportsmen" - Nos. 1/9

"Film Stars" - Intimate Interviews Nos. 1/3

\* No. 6 (Ronald Frankau) is known both with No. 2 and No. 31 at base of back.

The highest number in each sub-series as listed add up to a total of only 30 subjects, so that additional sub-series numbers were presumably issued.

## CORRESPONDENCE

[REDACTED] Bournemouth, BH6 4JA.

Dear Bill,

re. KUMBERG A.O.

*His French patent 203501 of 1st February 1890, was for the construction of a "Stereorama" in which several viewers were built into one machine so that viewers at a fairground, arcade, etc. could sit at a machine to view several "Stereoamas" instead of having to move to several booths.*

*His Patent of 1896 (simultaneously in England and France) with J. Rigg dealt with the construction and perfection and improvement of kinetoscopes and similar machines.*

*I think Frank Andrews will write to you on Kumberg's activities in London.*

Cheers!

Ernie.

[REDACTED] Bournemouth, BH6 4JA.

Dear Bill,

*I promised you a note on ERNEST OTHON KRUMBERG.*

*Jointly with Mr. Rigg he obtained French patent 255,467 in 1896 for the perfection and construction of Kinematographs and similar machines. Previously, in February, 1890 he obtained a French patent number 203501 for "Pavillon Rotatif: American Stereorama". I had hoped by now to have received photostats of the actual specifications to explain what these were, but they have not yet arrived. I will have to fulfill that later. His lawyers in Paris were Louis Gudmann & Cie.*

*I cannot discover if he was related to J.A. KUMBERG, of Paris, who invented the 'Weltbrenner' oil lamp for which he obtained French, German and Russian patents between 5th February, 1884 and 7th March, 1886.*

*Hoping that you are keeping well,*

Sincerely,

Ernie.

## BRITISH MUSIC HALL ON RECORD

### PART V

by Phil Hobson

#### AUSTIN RUDD ( ? — ? )

Yet another singing comic, whose songs have not survived. I am told that he made recordings for STAR 2 minute cylinders, and details of these and any other recordings are requested, as is information on his career.

#### MAIDIE SCOTT ( ? — ? )

Although she was apparently well known on the Halls from 1906 onwards, with numbers like "The Bird on Nellie's Hat" (HMV, VOCALION), I have no biographical details (help!). Her records are rather nice, mainly consisting of 'little girl' studies, like the delightful "Johnny Morgan's Sister" (ZONOPHONE). Other discs for HMV, ZONOPHONE, VOCALION.

#### MALCOLM SCOTT (1872 — 1929)

Billed as 'The Woman Who Knows', he was an early 'drag artist', who went on the Halls in 1903 (he had previously been on the legitimate stage). He later became known as a Panto 'dame' and early broadcaster. Patter recordings for G & T were followed, many years later, by one (?) electric disc on the ACO label ("The Story of Catherine Parr").

#### FRANK SEELEY ( ? — 1913)

Comic singer ("The Amateur Whitewasher", etc.) — no details. One recording for G & T.



### **ERNEST SHAND (1868 -- ? )**

Another comic. Although from Yorkshire he didn't appear as a Yorkshireman, in fact his style rather resembles that of GEORGE ROBEY, for he often appeared as a Pseudo-Clergyman, in such numbers as "We really had a most delightful evening" (ZONOPHONE). "The Bachelor" (also ZONOPHONE) is a good song. Many recordings for G & T, PATHE, ZONOPHONE, BEKA, ERA, NEOPHONE, PILOT, EDISON 2 minutes and EDISON BELL cylinders.

### **MARK SHERIDAN (1867 -- 1917)**

Became a favourite on the Halls from his London debut in 1895, with his quick-fire patter and breezy songs. Everybody knows his "I do like to be beside the Seaside" (JUMBO, ARIEL, THE GRAMOPHONE CO.) and, of course, "Who were you with last night?" (COLUMBIA, REGAL) is also still sung. With the coming of the first World War his "Here we are again" (COLUMBIA) became a number one hit. Many of his ditties are purely topical, but are not otherwise especially interesting. Sadly, Mark Sheridan, thinking his career was on the wane, committed suicide in Glasgow, December 1917. Many disc recordings for THE GRAMOPHONE CO., ZONOPHONE, PATHE, COLUMBIA, REGAL, JUMBO, ARIEL, ODEON, SCALA, WINNER, COLISEUM and cylinders for STERLING.

### **ELLA SHIELDS (1879 -- 1952)**

Although she became almost entirely associated with "Burlington Bertie from Bow" (DECCA, BROADCAST, COLUMBIA, REGAL) in her latter years, this well known artist (an American) originally appeared in Britain in 1904 singing 'Coon Songs'. Her famous Male Impersonations began in 1910. Many of her songs were written for her by her husband William Hargreaves, another good one being "Baa Lamb" (REGAL). A lesser known characterisation (and very good) is "I'm not all there" (COLUMBIA). She also sings (not too well) American importations like "If you knew Susie" and "Margie" (both COLUMBIA). As well as other discs for companies mentioned above, there is an early EDISON BELL cylinder listed.

### **SAMMY SHIELDS (1874 -- ? )**

From Glasgow, he made his first Music Hall appearance in 1905 and became known as 'The Football Enthusiast'. Recordings in this vein can be found on HMV, ZONOPHONE, ARIEL and PATHE.

### **LEO STORMONT ( ? -- 1923)**

Really a concert singer, he had many Music Hall dates, in songs of sentimental or patriotic ilk. Many were recorded for BERLINER, THE GRAMOPHONE CO., PATHE and COLUMBIA in the early days.

### **EUGENE STRATTON (1861 -- 1918)**

A real Music Hall 'great', he was an American and his early experience was over there, mainly with minstrel troupes from 1871 onwards. It was with one such troupe that he arrived in London in 1880 and decided to stay, but didn't go on the Halls until 1892. Although he had some successful songs by other writers, he entered his greatest period with his association with the composer Leslie Stuart, about 1896, who provided him with many great songs, including "Little Dolly Daydream" (HMV), and, of course, the classic "Lily of Laguna" (HMV). All Stratton's recordings were for THE GRAMOPHONE CO. The earliest were BERLINERS and are accompanied by Leslie Stuart, but the later ones are better recorded, including the only one doubled -- the immortal "Lily" and "I may be crazy" (another Stuart song). From his recordings, it is clear that Stratton's forte was his remarkable soft-shoe dancing, for the voice is rather poor, although he puts over his numbers well, and this bears out G.H. ELLIOTT'S remark that 'he was the greater dancer, but I was a better singer'. However, all of Stratton's recordings are of the greatest interest.

Perhaps a few words about the recordings made by LESLIE STUART (1866 – 1928) will not be out of place here, for as well as some early BERLINERS, on which he accompanied various artists, he was also the pianist backing his daughter MAY LESLIE STUART in two recordings for HMV and he made a fascinating medley of his songs for COLUMBIA (electric).

#### **TOM STUART (1878 – ? )**

An Irish comedian, who came to London in 1898 and found his metier as an impressionist. Only recordings known are songs on REX cylinders and a later sketch on COLUMBIA.

#### **RANDOLPH SUTTON (1888 – 1969)**

Still fresh in our memories with "On Mother Kelly's Doorstep" (which he never recorded commercially), Sutton, although he made his debut in 1915, came to the fore in the 1920s, with such 'cheeky numbers' as "My Girl's Mother" and those of the homespun type, like "Your Dog's come home again" (was this on PANACHORD?) and "Jogging along behind the Old Grey Mare" (WINNER). His style was well suited to recording and he made many for WINNER, RADIO, DECCA, PANACHORD and IMPERIAL. He was still going strong up to the end of the 1960s. Try "The Continong" (RADIO), which has a nice lilt.

#### **BETH TATE (1890 – ? )**

'The Californian Girl' first arrived here in 1911 and made a big hit with her typically American style of putting over a song, making later appearances in Revue. Discs for REGAL and PATHE.

#### **HARRY TATE (1873 – 1940)**

This famous 'sketch artist', who hailed from Scotland, was appearing in London from 1895 originally as a comic singer and impressionist. Later his sketches – "Fishing", "Golfing" and especially "Motoring" established him as a household word. He also did Panto and Revue and made some Films. He was killed in the London blitz of World War 2. His sketches do not come over too badly in recorded form, especially in their double-sided versions, although inevitably, one misses the stage 'business'. These can be found in various editions on COLUMBIA, ZONOPHONE, REGAL and THE GRAMOPHONE CO.

#### **MADGE TEMPLE ( ? – ? )**

A 'pop' singer, she was married to composer and conductor Herman Darewski, who wrote some of her numbers. She was also in Musical Comedy. Recordings for PATHE.

#### **VESTA TILLEY (1864 – 1952)**

Truly one of the 'elite' of the Halls, she was born in Worcester, her real name being Matilda Alice Powles. Her father, a Music Hall chairman known as Harry Ball, gave her a chance to appear at the age of three! She became well known in the Provinces, and when she started to do Male Impersonations, changed her name to Vesta Tilley. Coming to London in 1878, she became known as 'The London Idol', but was also a smash hit at all leading Halls throughout the country, toured the USA and was much applauded in Panto. She was in fact the supreme 'Male Impersonator', and remained so until her farewell appearances in 1920. Married to Walter de Freece (later Sir Walter), a Music Hall manager, who became an M.P. Her earliest recordings were made in 1900 for experimental sound films – I should imagine these no longer exist. The earliest commercial recordings were five cylinders for PATHE. A later series on EDISON 2 and 4 minute cylinders was followed by discs for the ODEON CO., variously issued on JUMBO, VALKYRIE, SCALA, COLISEUM, ARIEL, ALBION and her last were for REGAL and COLUMBIA, in 1915 and 1917 respectively. Considering how many years she had been on the stage before making even the earliest of her recordings, it is not surprising that the voice sounds rather rusty and thin, but there is no denying the authority and verve in everything she does – try "Introduce me to the lady" (JUMBO) for character and "When a fellow's in love" (COLISEUM, ALBION) for tongue-in-cheek sentiment.



## **NAT TRAVERS ( ? – ? )**

A 'coster' comedian, well known in the London area, between the Wars. His records for PICCADILLY and WINNER, while not being in the GUS ELEN class, are quite enjoyable.

## **THE TWO BOBS**

were BOB ADAMS and BOB ALDEN, 'Ragtime Duettists', with a lot of these sort of numbers to their credit on COLUMBIA and WINNER .

## **VESTA VICTORIA (1873 – 1951)**

The daughter of a Music Hall artist, she was born in Leeds and made her stage debut as a child of four, still appearing as such a child at the age of eighteen, when she first sang her hit "Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow!" (COLUMBIA medley). Further songs of this type followed and although she did sing more serious numbers, her forte was as the jilted bride in "Waiting at the church" (COLUMBIA and REGAL medleys, VICTOR, EDISON 2 minute cylinders) or the slighted girl-friend of "Now I have to call him 'Father'" (REGAL and COLUMBIA medleys, HMV). Made successful appearances in the USA, where she made her VICTOR records. In addition, there are acoustic recordings for G & T, COLUMBIA, PATHE, ZONOPHONE, HMV, CINCH, EDISON 2 minute cylinders (and I have an idea that she was also on BEKA — anyone confirm?). Electric medleys for COLUMBIA and REGAL.

## **NELLIE WALLACE (1870 – 1948)**

A great comedienne, Nellie was billed as 'The Essence of Eccentricity' which exactly describes her. Born in Glasgow, she started as a child clog dancer at Birmingham in 1888, then became part of a 'sisters' act and appeared in plays before finding her true niche as a female droll in 1903. Her style hardly altered from then until her final appearances with the 'Thanks For The Memory' Company over forty years later. Her recordings are few, only two sides for WINNER, eight for HMV (besides taking part in their 'Alice in Wonderland' set) and two for DECCA. All are treasurable, although one misses seeing her in action, so to speak!

## **DOROTHY WARD ( ? – )**

Mainly famous as a Principal Boy in Panto. Her records, for COLUMBIA and REGAL, are pleasant and sometimes charming, as is "My house is haunted" (REGAL) and in one she is joined by her husband SHUAN GLENNVILLE.

## **HARRY WELDON (1882 – 1930)**

A Liverpoolian who became a favourite during the first decades of this century with his burlesque sketches, songs and recitations. Discs for HMV, REGAL and COLUMBIA.

## **ALBERT WHELAN (1875 – 1961 or 1962?)**

From Australia, his first appearance in the British Isles was in London in 1901, where he supposedly invented the 'signature tune' by whistling the "Jolly Brothers Waltz" on his entry and exit. His first hit was "The Whistling Bowery Boy" (ZONOPHONE), but he seems to have made many 'cover versions' of other artists' songs. The two numbers with which he later became particularly associated were "The Preacher and the Bear" and "The Three Trees", both of which he recorded many times. He can be found on a variety of labels, including those of THE GRAMOPHONE CO., ZONOPHONE, JUMBO, DECCA, IMPERIAL, PANACHORD, SCALA, EDISON 2 minute and STERLING cylinders, PATHE, VOCALION, WINNER, ECLIPSE, BROADCAST and probably others! His last recording was for the Daniel Farson L.P. in 1961 (FONTANA).

## **CHARLES WHITTLE (1874 – 1947)**

A chorus singer, who had some good tunes with 'Billy Muggins', "My girl's a Yorkshire girl", "Put me among the girls", "Let's all go down the Strand" and 'We'll all go the same way home'. He recorded the last one for COLUMBIA, but did he ever make the others commercially? I know of one or two other discs for the REGAL label.

### **BILLY WILLIAMS (1877 – 1915)**

Articles on him have appeared in previous issues of this magazine (Nos. 13, 14, 15 and 16), so my remarks will be brief. He was an Australian, who came to London in 1901, but it was not until he began his recording career in 1907 that his voice and songs became known to every owner of a gramophone or phonograph. Recording seems to have been his main occupation, although he was quite well known on the Halls as 'The Man In The Velvet Suit'. A full listing of his recordings is being compiled, so I will content myself by saying that his personality is wonderfully captured on these (which are legion) and although his laugh seems to me to be somewhat overdone, his songs are nearly always entertaining and catchy. Favourites of mine include "We're all waiting for a girl", "I must go home tonight" and "The Taximeter Car".

### **BRANSBY WILLIAMS (1870 – 1961)**

Impersonator, Monolinguist and Actor, he was born in Hackney and after appearing in evening 'Free-and-Easies', became a professional touring actor. His Music Hall debut was made in 1896 and from then on, his long career embraced Straight Plays, Revue, Panto, Radio, Films and Television. His Dickensian monologues are general favourites (my own is "Grandfather Smallweed" from "Bleak House" – COLUMBIA). Of his recitations, "The green eye of the little yellow god" (COLUMBIA, PATHE, EDISON BLUE and 4 minute cylinders) is famous, and powerful is the only word to describe "The Portrait" (COLUMBIA). Many other records for the above mentioned companies and for HMV and ACTUELLE.

### **FRANK WOOD ( ? – ? )**

A singing-comic whose only recording seems to be some "Impressions of Old Time Comedians" on electric COLUMBIA.

### **TOM WOOTWELL (1865 – ? )**

Another comedian, who started in an acrobatic double act, then became successful as a single turn in Music Halls, Revue and Pantomime, also touring abroad. His best known song was "The little shirt my mother made for me" (EDISON 2 minute cylinder). He made quite a few recordings for various companies – COLUMBIA, REGAL, COLISEUM, PHOENIX, EDISON 2 and 4 minute and EDISON BELL cylinders. "The 'Appy Convict" (Single-sided COLUMBIA) is a good example, as is "How dare they!" (PHOENIX, EDISON 2 minute cylinder) – a 'dude' study.

### **S.W. WYNDHAM ( ? – ? )**

Yet another comedian! Of his career I know nothing, but he had a good song in "That's what the beauty calls me now!". The only recording of his that I know of and have heard (REGAL) does not impress me much.

## **PAUL ROBESON**

by B. A. Williamson

To anyone, who like me grew up at the poorer end of society in the thirties the voice of Paul Robeson evokes a special warmth and affection. Robeson spoke, or rather sang for all the world's less fortunates regardless of colour with a style which was simple and totally without frills, at times displaying a gentle humour. A complete contrast with the brashness of Louis Armstrong and the highly stylised Bing Crosby, his contemporaries.

His career as a singer virtually disappeared in the early post war years, probably as much as a result of his own preference for political activity as the political climate in his home country. More misled than capricious one thinks, or hopes. His golden days were already passed and any artistic assessment must be almost restricted to the twenties and thirties when he was much in demand for concerts, recordings, stage shows and films. The shows included Show Boat (in London), "All God's Chillun Got Wings", "Emperor Jones" and "Black Boy"



and films "Sanders of the River", "Showboat" (1937 version) amongst others.

I understand that Jomo Kenyatta the President of Kenya can be seen in a small part in "Sanders of the River" and perhaps in the comparison between the two characters the weakness of Robeson's make up is revealed. Kenyatta was prepared to work in a film part but kept his sights firmly in the political direction, Robeson with a great natural singing gift aimed in two directions with the result that his political involvement was a disaster and the most beautiful singing voice never developed musically beyond the plantation song or others of a similarly limited calibre.

A great artist cannot rely wholly on a natural gift but must strive to achieve technical improvement. This is most important to the singer whose powers can be expected to decline with the passing years and whose audience is likely to demand change and a wider repertoire. I last saw Paul Robeson on Television about fifteen years ago and it was an unhappy affair, the golden voice in decline, the material limited and easily forgotten.

If the reader detects a sadness in these remarks then I have achieved what I set out to do because there is a double sadness about the death of Paul Robeson, the loss of a fine musical personality and the artistic loss of an unfilled potential.

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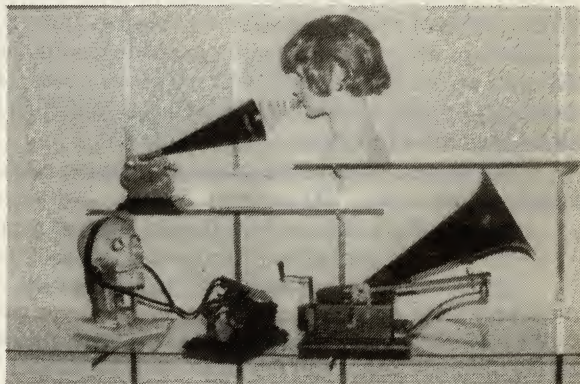
The Treasurer has received a cheque for £11 (sterling) with no indication of the name and address of sender or the purpose of the payment. The cheque was issued by 'The Trust Bank of South Africa' Sea Point Branch and the envelope bears a Cape Town postmark. Will the sender please contact the Treasurer?

UNUSUAL RECORD? Relabelled records are not very uncommon, but I came across a record with three labels on it recently and this is certainly the first in my experience. I bought the record for 10p because the 'Phoenix' label was defaced and there were clear signs of another label below. Wetting the label, I peeled it off to reveal a perfect 'Regal' red and gold label but the signs of a 'Columbia Rena' are unmistakeable. The record is 'Jesmond Dene/So We All Went Walking Home' by Shaun Glenville. The performer's name did not appear on the Phoenix label which merely describes it as a 'Comic Song' (number regrettably illegible). The Regal number is G.6447. The Columbia-Regal connection is hardly surprising, but I know nothing at all about the Phoenix label, and can only presume that unsold records were bought up by them and marketed without the artist's name.

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## ARE YOU RECEIVING ME. . . ?

A bizarre scene from our medical member Toru Funahashi, who reassures us that two of the items are plastic, the rest a couple of Graphophones of the Q range, and a somewhat disdainful Gramophone in search of a dog.



Gentlemen,

*In regard to the imagined encounter between Mr. Andrews and Mr. "Greenhorn" appearing in Number 87, I hope that I may offer the readers some information which may prove reliable, definite and gratifying.*

*Mr. Andrews is correct in assuming that the Johnson patent of 1908 supercedes the infamous Jones patent after the Court battle of 1911. Mr. "Greenhorn", however, is mistaken in his suggestion that the former patent continued to control the lateral cut disc scene until its official expiration date of 1925. At first the fear of infringement was sufficient to keep such American record firms as the General Phonograph Corp. (OKEH), The Aeolian Co. (AEOLLAN-VOCALION), Rex Phonograph Co. (REX) and Starr Piano Co. (STARR and GENNETT) strictly confined to the less popular vertical cut discs, but these hill-and-dale recordings were so unprofitable that Starr decided to force the hand of Victor, and, in 1918, they began producing lateral cut records. When Victor brought suit, Aeolian and Canadian Compo joined in the fray to overturn the 1908 patent. In 1922 the United States Supreme Court decided in favour of Starr. Thus the Johnson patent never saw its fulfillment. With Victor tied up in litigation and the prospect of a Court ruling against them imminent, all of the aforementioned firms except for Rex had by 1922 already embarked upon the manufacture of lateral cut discs. Hence the judgment merely protected them from reprisals and assured the entrance of yet other companies into the formerly exclusive market.*

Yours,  
T.C. FABRIZIO,  
Member.

TREVOR B. MIMIT?

Dear Mr. Williamson,

*Please find enclosed cheque for my overdue membership fee of £2.25.*

*Have also enclosed extra copy of the Society magazine addressed to Trevor B. Mimit who seems to live at my house. Who IS this fellow I keep getting mail for? Does he in fact exist I ask myself or is it because I am a member of the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology. If I am in fact Plural I can let both of me read one copy when one of us has finished with it!*

*Anyway, many many thanks,*

Yours,  
T. R. Brockway.

## MATRIX APPEAL FROM FRANK ANDREWS AND MICHAEL SMITH

The next volume in the "Voices of the Past" series, which will be devoted to a large section of the early Columbia recordings as issued in the United Kingdom is gradually being prepared for the printer. We have already appealed for matrices in the 9,000 series and for matrices of the electrical re-recordings which replaced earlier acoustic recordings, and although completion has not been achieved, we are well satisfied with the data we have, taking into consideration that we have not had access to the Columbia recording ledger, although we know such a ledger does exist and that others have the information contained therein.

The present appeal is for matrices from the double-sided 12" diameter records which began a catalogue Series No. 100 upwards. These records were issued in the following styles of label:-

- (1) Rena Double Face Record (Highest number provisionally put at 151).
- (2) Columbia-Rena Record (provisionally put at No. 152 onwards), which later became,
- (3) Columbia Record, which later became,
- (4) Columbia.

We have all the original matrices for the Rena Double Face Records, but these were not stamped on the discs nor printed on the labels, instead the matrices for "Renas" were obliterated and a new series, pre-fixed either "LR" or "LS", replaced the original American and British Columbia numbers.



We would like to have these "Rena" matrix numbers. The only ones we have, at present, are from records which may bear any of the above label styles, having catalogue numbers, 101, 105, 111, 117, 142, 145, 147, 149, 151. I repeat, we have the Rena matrix numbers from those, which means we require another 84 matrices from 42 discs. Can you help? With regard to the remainder, that is, records from groups 2, 3 and 4 above, we need the matrices from the following records with catalogue numbers:- 158 & 9, 163 & 4, 168, 174, 181 & 2, 184 to 6, 188, 192 & 3, 195, 198, 200 to 202, 204 to 6, 211 to 213, 218, 220 & 1, 224 to 228, 230 to 233, 235 & 6, 240 to 245, 251, 256 & 7, 261 & 2, 266, 274, 276 to 8, 280 & 1, 284, 286, 291, 293 to 5, 298 to 301, 303 & 304, 306 & 7, 313 & 4, 316, 318, 323, 326 to 330, 333, 337 & 8, 341 & 2, 344, 346, 349, 353 & 4, 356 to 8, 362 to 5, 368, 371, 375 to 7, 379, 380, 382 & 3, 386, 394 to 6, 398 & 9, 406 & 7, 412, 418 & 9, 421 & 2, 426 to 9, 431, 435, 439 to 441, 445 & 6, 449, 453, 456, 458, 461, 463 & 4, 466, 472, 474 & 5, 479, 484, 490, 492, 495, 503, 509, 510, 515, 522, 526 & 7, 529 to 531, 538 & 9, 542 to 550, 552 to 5, 557 to 562, 564, 566 to 571, 575, 578 to 581, 584 to 590, 592 & 3, 598 to 603, 606 to 610, 612 to 4, 616 to 620, 624, 627 & 8, 631 to 4, 638 & 9, 641 to 4, 646 to 7, 649 to 651, 653 & 4, 657 & 8, 662 & 3, 665 to 670, 672 to 677, 679 to 83, 685 to 7, 690, 692, 696 to 9, 701 & 2, 704 to 6, 709, 711 to 22, 724 to 31, 733 to 6, 738 to 42, 745, 747 to 50, 752 to 6, 759 to 62, 764 & 5, 770 to 6, 778, 780 & 1, 783 to 6, 688 to 90, 793, 795 to 8, 801, 803 to 827, 831, 834 & 5, 837 to 40, 842 & 3, 845, 848 to 52, 855, 857 to 863, 865 to 8, 870 & 1, 873, 875 to 881, 885 to 891, 893, 897 to 900, 903 to 6, 908 to 10, 912 to 4, 917, 922 to 4, 926, 930 to 4, 939, 942, 944 & 5, 947 & 8, 955 to 8, 960, 963 & 4, 966, 968, 970 to 4, 979, 981, 985 & 6, 988 & 9, 991, 993 & 4, 997 to 999.

Can you please assist?

All submissions to me, Frank Andrews, [REDACTED] Neasden, N.W.10. Thank you.

### THE BUBBLE BOOKS

It is now known to me that Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.'s "Bubble Books" contained 3 single sided discs labelled "The Harper-Columbia Book That Sings" — the discs were made by the Columbia Graphophone Manufacturing Company of the U.S.A. I can only imagine that surplus stocks of these records were sent to the U.K. or else Columbia were passing through one of their "transformations" — the company in the U.S.A. seeming to fail in the same degree as the British company prospered!

My appeal for disc information still stands. I have details of discs numbered 2-3 and 9-2. The first digit indicates the album. Records should be numbered 1-1, 1-2, 1-3; 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, and so on up to the 36th disc which should be numbered 12-3. All discs have matrix numbers with a hyphenated "take" or stamp number, sometimes with a suffixed letter. The books cost 7/6d each, and were issued between the 13 months of November 1920 to November 1921. I believe they were on sale in America much earlier, with the books produced by the publishing house of Harper, hence the discrepancy of the records' labels to the name of the Publishers in the U.K.

### MORE ABOUT GEORGE BAKER'S BEKA STUDIO RECORDINGS

*by Frank Andrews*

Firstly, let me deal with my article in Issue No. 86 of "Hillandale News" of October last.

Regarding the "Favorite" records. These did not demise in 1916, thus proving "appearances" are deceptive. I now have proof that they were currently on sale during the spring of 1917, for dealers and the public were advised to write to the owners of the label for the complete catalogue. But as with the Jumbo Record no further release lists were published in the trade magazines (after December 1916 for Favorites) during the war against Germany.

And what do you know? "Foolish" Frank has some of the George Baker discs discussed in the article! I will come to those in a moment.

The recording engineer at the Beka Record Studios in the City Road, London, E.C. was Mr. Arthur Gilbert and this is the same Arthur Gilbert, music hall comedian, who appeared on the "White" Cylinder Records, my full list of which has been published in a back number of the "Talking Machine Review". I believe he made records for the Edison 2 minutes wax cylinders of the National Phonograph Company as well, but as I do not have any listings of Edison cylinders I cannot check this. He appeared on disc records, under various pseudonyms, as well, including Beka, Jumbo, Scala Record and Coliseum Record — I believe he also



recorded for the Gramophone Company, as an artiste.

Although I made a number of requests for information, both about our Honorable Member's recordings and about "Beka" matters generally, I received only one letter in response.

Some information is only to be had from collectors and collections – I only appeal for information when I have exhausted all my own lines of research – so, come on lads, read my previous article again and look at your disc collections to see if you are harbouring some of the data I am seeking.

The sole letter I did receive was from that prince of researchers into the electric gramophone recordings, Mr. Jim Hayes, of Liverpool, whose listings, I hope, you have been adding to your reading matter library?

From Jim, I had a listing of George Baker's 12" "Parlophone" recordings. You will see that I mentioned George Baker had written to the Hillandale News, in the past, saying he had never made Parlophone recordings, and, as you will now be aware, I have said that those Parlophones must have been from the 12" discs matrices which were recorded by George during the Great War period.

On the circumstantial evidence of the titles alone, sent in by Jim, my assertion appears to be substantiated, and with that fact verified to my satisfaction, it is now possible to state that "George Barnes" on "Scala Ideale" and "Beka Meister" Records is in fact "George Baker".

Often, when a new artiste appeared on any of the labels current at any given time and the matter was discussed in the columns of the trade periodicals, there was an accompanying picture of the new artiste. When "George Barnes" was written about there was no picture! But just read what was said of this allegedly "new artiste".

"Mr. Barnes is a singer with a highly cultivated baritone voice who renders two of the best known numbers from "Faust" in the most irreproachable manner. These are the famous 'Serenade' and the "Death of Valentine". In his vocalisation he proves himself to be a welcome addition to our all few artists of home growth. He sings with a distinction which is quite remarkable, exhibiting the most careful training. As a maker of records he is perfectly 'au fait' of all the necessary requirements, and will doubtless be received with unbounded applause by all truly musical gramophonists." This was in reference to Beka Meister Record M.179, also available as "Scala 'Ideale' Record" 12", 5037.

These two sides were not issued on Coliseum Record and were never issued as by George Baker, until, seven years later, in the autumn of 1923, when they were issued on 12" Parlophone, No. E.10049 (Thank you, Jim Hayes!).

Neither Jim Hayes nor I have the matrix numbers for these recordings. Has anyone? The full details are:-

BEKA MEISTER	Mx.	.....	"Faust" – Serenade (Gounod)	)	George Barnes,
M.179	Mx.	.....	"Faust" – Death of Valentine (Gounod)	)	(Baker) – bari.
SCALA "IDEALE"	Mx.	.....	"Faust" – Serenade	)	George Barnes (Baker)
5037	Mx.	.....	"Faust" – Death of Valentine	)	George Barnes (Baker)
PARLOPHONE	Mx.	.....	"Faust" – Serenade	)	
E.10049	Mx.	.....	"Faust" – Death of Valentine	)	George Baker - bari.

If we can find the matrix numbers for the above, which should be in a 9,000 series and will be written into the centre portion of the discs, covered by the label, (as was the practice of the Beka Recording Studios during the Great War), then we will have proof positive that the "new" Parlophones, from the new Parlophone Company Limited of 1923, in this instance, were, in fact, pressings from matrices which were already seven years old! Please have a look at your discs if you have any of the six sides listed above.

In answering Jim Hayes' letter it struck me that the title "Queen of My Heart – Dorothy" was familiar to me for some special reason. With the windmills of my mind a-whirring I conjured up before my eyes a 12" disc, single sided, which bore a white label, upon which was pencilled "Queen of My Heart" and "Dorothy" and a rubber-stamped number in mauve print – nothing else. This was before I had finished my letter, and I mentioned it to Jim, saying I thought I might have a test pressing of one of George Baker's 12" matrices in my loft.

I have, and I have just played it over to confirm. It is the voice of George. It was issued on Parlophone E.10342 in August 1925, eight years and nine months after it had been issued on Coliseum Record 5029 in November 1916. My mauve printed number is the matrix number, which is in the 9,000 series used on the 12" diams. Beka Meister Records, the Scala de Luxe Records, the Scala Ideale Records and the Coliseum Records, and perhaps on a few 12" Homochords, although I have no evidence as yet. "Queen of My Heart" from Cellier's "Dorothy" has matrix number 9657 inscribed "in the wax" on my copy.

As originally issued, George Baker was given the name Walter Duncan on the Coliseum Record, and the coupling, which was kept for the later Parlophone record, was "Star of My Soul", from Leslie Jones "The Geisha". If anyone has the Parlophone or the Coliseum Record as double-sided discs could they please let me have the



matrix numbers? My single sided copy is definitely a pre-Parlophone issue pressing. The Parlophone discs of George Baker, may not have the original matrices, the metal stampers may have been machined off in a lathe and new numbers substituted.

The rest of the Parlophone Records, issued between October 1923 and November 1926, but derived from the Great War recordings of George in the Beka Studios in City Road, are:-

Parl. E.10079	Mx. ....	"Otello" – Credo (Verdi)	)	From Scala 'Ideale'
	Mx. ....	"Il Trovatore" – Il Balen (Verdi)	)	Record 5030
Parl. E.10252	Mx. ....	Love, Could I only tell thee (Capel) from Beka Meister M.182. Barnes.		
		REVERSE BY R. DURANT/Scala		
		who was ROBERT HOWE/Parlophone		
	Mx. ....	The Arrow and the Song (from Scala de Luxe 1593)		
Parl. E.10342	Mx.9675	"Dorothy" – Queen of my Heart (Cellier)	)	Both from
	Mx. ....	"The Geisha" – Star of My Soul (L. Jones)	)	Coliseum 5029.
Parl. E.10507	Mx. ....	Cavaliers & Roundheads	)	Robert Howe from Scala Ideale 5035
	Mx. ....	The Two Grenadiers (Schumann)	)	Baker from Scala de Luxe 1664
				Also issued on Coliseum as by Walter Duncan.

"The Two Grenadiers" on "Scala de Luxe Record" was originally coupled with 'When the King went forth to War' and this side was reviewed in April 1917 as herewith:-

"I have for some time considered George Baker to be one of the very finest baritones we have, for not only is he a fine singer with a fine voice but he also possesses a temperament and uses it.

"Though he has now attained to the well deserved dignity of the 5/6d single sided (a reference here to the Gramophone Company, Ltd.'s records – F.A.) he has left behind him on his way up, as it were, several records at quite reasonable, or even cheap, prices that are just as finely sung as his latest work.

"One of these is 'When the King went forth to War' on 12" Scala Record 1664. It is a fine song and has been essayed by many of the great basses and baritones from Chaliapin downwards, but one could hardly wish for a better interpretation than George Baker gives us. It affords, in the contrast of the lots of the King and the common soldier, plenty of scope for variety of expression, of which composer and singer have made the most. In construction it belongs to the so-called 'art song' type as seen, for example, in Schubert's 'Erl King', that is to say, the musical setting aims at enhancing the feeling of the words, without much regard to musical form. In this case, the effect relies largely on rhythm – compare the martial swing of the first stanza with the more legato treatment, and the middle agitato section with its 'choppy' time. The melody, especially in its latter half, is very similar. It is the accompaniment that makes most of the difference, though here it is greatly helped by the art of the singer, who quite alters the tone of his voice in these contrasting passages.

"In fact, one of the most telling features of Baker's singing is the way he seems able to make the quality of his voice suit the sentiment he wishes to convey. Note in the last two stanzas the ringing tones in which he describes the triumphant entry of the King, and the velvety softness that adds to the tragedy of the quiet ending."

Thanks to Jim Hayes (once again), the short list of Parlophones, listed above are all that I know of. However, Jim Hayes has not the complete list of the 12" Parlophones with the prefix "E" numbers, and he would like details of the following, with matrix numbers please! It may be that more of George's early 12" recordings were on some of these unknown Parlophones, even the record reviewed above. The Parlophone "Blank Entries" are:-

E.10004. E.10017. E.10028. E.10039. E.10041. E.10043. E.10050/51. E.10060/61/62. E.10074. E.10085. E.10087/88. E.10101/02/03. E.10110. E.10157.

Please send all details to me at 46, Aboyne Road, Neasden, N.W.10, and please look at Hillandale News again, No. 86, pp. 385 to 390.

I have a 10" Beka Grand Record, No. 904, a war-time issue of 1914, which has Robert English on one side and Victor Conway on reverse. I consider them both to be George Baker, but will have a second opinion before I say so with certainty. The pieces are "The Eye beneath the Busby" (E. Kemble) as by Conway, and "Fall In" (F.H. Cowen) as by English. (Harold Black on Jumbo Records).

With reference to the two songs "When the Great Red Dawn is Shining" and "Joan of Arc, They are Calling You", I should have mentioned that it was also possible that these two songs may have been recorded and released at about the same time sung by both George Baker and Lionel Rothery – tenor. Lionel Rothery had the honour of being on the first needle cut Clarion Record, No. 100, later re-numbered 101.

Has anyone any information with reference to my appeals on page 389 of Issue No. 86 of Hillandale News?

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